



WEEKLY COLUMN: AGRICULTURE IS RESILIENT THROUGH DISASTER

By, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

**Bernalillo-
Sandoval County
FSA Office**

September 2011

**Bernalillo-
Sandoval County
2600 Palmilla Rd.
Suite A
Los Lunas, NM 87031**

Phone:
505-865-4641 ext. 2
Fax:
505-866-0662
www.fsa.usda.gov/NM

Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Bernalillo- Sandoval
County Staff:**

Lisa M. Garay,
County Executive
Director

Melinda Martin,
Program Technician

**Bernalillo- Sandoval
County
Committee Members:**

Estolano Griego,
Chairperson

Larry Trujillo, Vice-
Chairperson

Annie Sandoval,
Member

Chris Lucero, Member

Randy White, Member

Sam Montoya, Minority
Advisor

**COC Regular
Meetings**
Monthly—Fourth
Wednesday—10:00am

For farmers, ranchers, and growers who have seen their crops decimated by drought, flood or other disasters, this year reminds us of the critical importance of maintaining a strong safety net. Producers have already received more than \$1.6 billion in crop insurance payments for their losses this year on top of emergency program support worth \$160 million. And USDA has looked for additional flexibility in our programs to offer credit and support to help families and farm operations rebuild.

Despite these challenges, American agriculture is as resilient as ever. In fact, according to USDA's new estimates, farm income is at an all time high, and even adjusting for inflation this will be the best year since the mid-1970s. Net farm income is up more than 30% over last year. And it will mean higher incomes for farm families.

We are also in the middle of a record year for agricultural exports, which we should match again next year. This will help support more than 1 million American jobs and mean an agricultural trade surplus of about \$42.5 billion.

These natural disasters have challenged us as a nation. But despite the setbacks, American agriculture is thriving. The men and women who own and operate America's farms and ranches are some of the most resilient in the world. And I know that with their continued dedication and hard work, we will maintain the strength and profitability of American agriculture, and its work to provide food to the nation.

FARM BILL 2008 EQUIP

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that helps producers install measures to protect the soil, water, air, and other natural resources on their working lands.

Through EQIP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides funding and professional expertise for measures that protect natural resources while ensuring sustainable production on farms, ranches and working forest land.

The application dead-line for the currently funding period will be December 2, 2011. For questions on program requirements and eligibilities, please contact your local USDA Service Center or see our website at www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov

LIVESTOCK FORAGE DISASTER PROGRAM

The Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to: drought conditions or fire on federally managed land. Producers in Bernalillo & Sandoval Counties are eligible to apply for LFP benefits. The deadline to apply for small grain losses is July 1, 2011 and the deadline to apply for improved grass losses is December 15, 2011.

Eligible livestock producers may receive assistance for eligible livestock grazing losses that occur due to drought or fire.

County committees can only accept applications after being notified by the National Office of qualifying drought, or if Federal agency prohibits producers from grazing normal permitted livestock on Federal managed lands due to qualifying fire.

For 2010 and subsequent years, signup applications must be filed no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the grazing losses occurred. Losses must occur in calendar year the application is being filed.

Eligible producers must have obtained a policy or plan of insurance under FCIA or NAP coverage by the applicable state sales closing date.

Additional Information about LFP including eligible livestock and fire criteria is available at county FSA offices or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov.

REMEMBER HAY NET

Producers are encouraged to use Hay Net on the FSA website www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet. This online service allows producers with hay and those who need hay to post ads so they can make connections. Hay Net is a popular site for farmers and ranchers who have an emergency need, such as the one caused by the current drought conditions. Individual ads can be posted free of charge by producers who complete a simple online registration form the first time they use the site.

PAYMENT LIMITATIONS

Anyone that plans to participate in 2011 programs is required to submit a completed CCC-902, CCC-926, and CCC-901, if applicable, for payment eligibility and payment limitation purposes. The form used previously was called a CCC-502.

Contributions

All partners, stockholders, or members with an ownership interest in the legal entity must make a contribution, whether compensated or **not** compensated, for active--*

- personal labor,
- active personal management,
- or a combination of active personal labor and active personal management to the farming operation;

*Note: there are exceptions for spouses. Additional information on payment limitations is available at FSA county offices or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov

DISASTER ASSISTANCE

The Farm Service Agency would like to remind crop and livestock producers throughout states that have recently experienced severe damage from flooding, wildfires and tornadoes that FSA programs are available to assist with recovery.

FSA administers several important programs that help producers recover from disaster damage and livestock deaths. Among the key programs available to address impacts from disasters are the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), the Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program, and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP).

Fact sheets for all of these programs can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov; click on Newsroom, then Fact Sheets.

We encourage all who have suffered a disaster due to the recent severe weather conditions to read the fact sheets and visit their local FSA county office so they get a quick start in the recovery process.

ACREAGE REPORTING FOR CRP & NAP

Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. Crop acreage for the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported.

Prevented Planting:

Prevented planting is to be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date. Failure to report prevented planting acreage could result in loss of benefits for the SURE program or possibly other disaster assistance programs.

Failed Acreage:

Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.

Livestock Producers Required to Re-register Livestock Brands

The expiration period for 10-year brand registration is rapidly approaching. All livestock producers who have a brand recorded in the County Clerk's office must re-register their brand in the county in which the livestock are located in order for it to remain a valid brand. Most producers who borrow money for their livestock operation are required to have their brands registered and provide a copy of the registration to their lender.

Brand re-registration begins August 30, 2011 and ends February 29, 2012. After the re-registration period is over, any previously recorded brands that were not re-registered will expire and become available to anyone.

Brand applications can be found at: <http://www.tscra.org/brands/application.pdf>.

ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME

USDA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Internal Revenue Service to establish an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent will be required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to FSA.

The agreement ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-927 (Individual) and/or CCC-928 (Legal Entity) to the Internal Revenue Service by June 1, 2011 to avoid interruption of program benefits. These forms may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices or online at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainservlet>.

Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$1,119,000. Producers are encouraged to apply early so that a loan can be processed and funded in a timely manner.

To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office staff.

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) Funding Possible

ECP offers assistance to eligible producers who have lost fencing, conservation structures and livestock due to wildfire or natural disasters. Funds can be used to repair farmland damaged by natural disasters or for carrying out emergency water conservation measures during periods of severe drought. ECP funding is not "automatic". Producers aware of a need for this type of assistance should contact their local FSA office immediately.

If ECP funding is approved, it is important to submit your request for ECP assistance before beginning reconstructive work. Completing reconstructive work before submitting an ECP request could result in forfeiture of program eligibility. Producers can use ECP funds to remove debris on agricultural lands, restore fences, grade and shape land and repair existing conservation structures damaged by the disaster.

Program eligibility is determined by the county committee by conducting on-site inspections that take into account the type and extent of the damage. Conservation problems that existed before the disaster are not eligible for ECP assistance. ECP program participants can receive financial assistance for up to 75 percent of the cost to implement approved emergency conservation practices.

Dates to Remember	
Sept. 30	Deadline to Purchase NAP for Barley, Oats, Triticale, Wheat
Nov. 20	Deadline to Purchase NAP for Apples, Cherries, Grapes, Peaches
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program

FSA SIGNATURE POLICY

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

There are exceptions to the rule, where spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

For more clarification on spousal signature authority, feel free to contact your local FSA office.

MILC PRODUCTION START MONTH CHANGE PROVISIONS

Provisions to the MILC program require that dairy operators select a month of commercially marketed production for which CCC will begin issuing payments to the dairy operation.

Changes to the start month must be made on or before the 14th of the month before the:

- Month originally selected by the dairy operation as their MILC production start month
- Newly selected MILC production start month for the dairy operation

Changes must be made prior to payment rates being publicly announced for both the original production start month the dairy operation is changing from and the production start month to which the dairy operation is changing.

LIVESTOCK INDEMNITY PROGRAM (LIP)

LIP provides assistance to producers for livestock deaths that result from natural disaster. LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including loss due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, diseases, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold. Eligible losses must have occurred on or after Jan. 1, 2008, and before Oct. 1, 2011.

A notice of loss must be filed with FSA within 30 days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 1.5% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle = 3%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under, "normal" conditions. Producers should file a LIP application as soon as possible to avoid a delay in processing and receipt of disaster assistance.



PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID

Albuquerque, NM

PERMIT # 932

HISPANIC AND WOMEN FARMERS

A process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who believe they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans has been established.

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation.

For additional information on this and other settlement issues contact:

Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process, please visit:
www.farmerclaims.gov or call 1-888-508-4429

Pigford – The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation, please visit:
www.blackfarmerscase.com or call 1-866-950-5547

Keepseagle - The Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement please visit: www.IndianFarmClass.com or call 1-888-233-5506

NAP LOSS FILING

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576 (Notice of Loss) in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).